Moments in Time - #4

Did you know?

Highlights in the cricket career of Frank Odel Mason
[Note: most people know him as “F.O.” (pronounced Effo)]
Contributed by Fred Prescod
Education Committee of SVGAT

Most Vincentians would be familiar with the name F.O. Mason, but many younger ones and those who aren’t into cricket would know very few details of his cricketing career. I searched around a bit for details of his most significant accomplishments and came up with the highlights chronicled below.

1. F.O. clean bowls Worrell for “0”

Vynnette A. Fredrick, an attorney-at-law and sometime writer reports the following about F.O. Mason:

... with a twinkle in his eye, he recounts his first meeting with Frank Worrell who had just come off a tour in Trinidad where he (Worrell) had scored in excess of three hundred runs. “In the second match I bowled him for 25 runs.”

“The Barbadian team had come to St. Vincent. We were to play two matches at the King George V playing field. I had been bowling and Worrell came in to bat. My first ball went past the wicket and about its own business. On my second delivery Worrell was bowled for naught! The ball wrecked the stumps, the bails went flying and pandemonium hit the playing field. Imagine this in the context of the great Worrell coming to a small island and having a small islander send him packing in two deliveries – such was the awesome talent of Frank Mason. “I was hoisted in the air by spectators who converged on the field...”

I subsequently asked a mutual friend, Clifford Edwards to contact F.O. for more details of this occasion. Clifford wrote:

I called F.O. Mason this morning. The occasion was 1947, either March or April at King George V Playing Field, Arnos Vale (the top part of the present runway, where they used to have Horse Racing) that he bowled Frank Worrell for 0 in the first Innings and again for 25 in the second innings. Worrell came with a Barbados Maple Club team. Frankie Thomas was also a member of that team. Frankie Thomas came back to St Vincent about a year later and settled. FO went for West Indies trials in Guyana and Trinidad but did not make the team.

Clifford’s last statement is supported by this quote from F.O. in Vynette Fredrick’s article:

“I am the only Caribbean man who played against all the touring teams to the Caribbean during the 1950s and 60s – but never played for the West Indies.”

2. Captain F.O. demolishes the great Dominican team

Another friend, Dr. Geoff Edwards e-mailed me the following:

F.O. got called to West Indies trials I believe at the same time as Wes Hall was called up? He had better figures, but Wes was selected and went on to an outstanding WI career including the tied Test in Australia in 1961 or so.
My most memorable incident was in the late 50's I guess, or early 60's? when FO captained SVG against Dominica At Victoria park. Garnet Niles, Manning Jackson, Bramble, Garnet Brisbane etc. - long before my time. [Foster (Lester) Huggins was also in this team.] Dominica made nearly 300 or so in the 1st innings and SVG were bundled out short of that total. People booed FO and then he came out that evening with pace and swing and took many early wickets, Clem John, Larocque, etc. in that team. SVG won and then FO retired gracefully.

Geoff’s recollection is supported by another quote from F.O. in Vynette Frederick’s article:

“I ended my career in 1962 at Victoria Park in the finals against Dominica. In the first innings Dominica led by over two hundred runs. Before the start of the second innings I told the boys, ‘look we going to win this match.’ In the second innings we bowled them out for a low score. I will never forget my figures: 13 overs 3 maidens 13 runs 9 wickets. We bowled out Dominica in the second innings for 32!”

3. F.O. handled the bat too

Although F.O. was noted as a bowler, he was no slouch with the bat either; especially when his team was badly in need of some runs. I vaguely recalled an instance in which F.O. had scored a large number of runs – mostly sixes and fours – in record time, but I wasn’t sure of the numbers and the exact occasion. So I telephoned him for clarification. He confirmed that the occasion was an inter-island tournament in Dominica – St. Vincent versus St. Lucia. His tally of runs was 48, scored in a record 18 minutes! Of course St. Vincent won the match.

More general information about this outstanding Vincentian can be found in Vynette Fredrick’s article at: